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With which is Incorporated the "Independent."

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A HAWAIIAN WALHALLA.

Joaquin Miller's Experiences While

Camping Out on Judd Street.

COWS THAT CLIMB TREES AND HORSES THAT ARE WOOLLY.

The Poet's Trip to the Ancient Native Burial Place and What He Saw While in the Cavern.

I had been invited, and had become a recluse at the base of a Honolulu lava steep, in a queer little cow and horse pasture in which I had planned to pitch a tent. This was on the trade-wind edge of Honolulu. But the harbor side is quiet.

It might bore you to tell how I had just completed, at the point of the sword, you might say a history of a thousand pages for a rushing Chicago firm, and had sought the islands, or almost anywhere, for seclusion and rest; for my nervous forces were all dried up, and I was on the edge of death from malaria, quincy, nose-bleeds, nervous exhaustion and all the other dozen ills and ailments from overwork. But how receptive is the mind, the body, the whole being at such times! How the howling trade winds do howl! How one remembers all that is fantastic, weird, tender! The creamy smell of sandal-wood will fill my nostrils while I live, and the wild and tremulous winds of that cow pasture with its half-prostrate palms, its rickety and rattling cowsheds and its half-roofless old cottage will roar in my ears till I have set foot in the brink of the River of Rest.

I had bought a tent, the better to be alone, and the privilege to pitch this there was my share and interest in the renting of a rickety cowshed at the remnant of aristocratic Judd street, on the windy edge of Honolulu.

A man with intermittent malaria don't want too much wind. I asked the enterprising owner of the cow-cottages, when he was showing them to me one windy day, how it happened that the palm trees and mango trees and tamarind trees came to be leaning along with the trade winds at an angle of forty-five if the place was, as he protested, "as restful as a lamb," and he said there had been a few earthquakes and landslides and volcanoes and little things like that lately, and so the trees had got a little twisted; but if I would just wait the wind would go down and I could pitch my tent and all would be lovely and lamblike.

I waited—waited a week, waited a month. Meantime he turned in his cows and his second-hand horses. They turn their horses out on the islands to eat—to eat lava, presumably, as the hay is about all brought from California—and the little horses soon get woolly, and they rub and rub against your house, your trees, anything, till the wool and hair hang in mats and knobs. Then they look as if they had been stuffed and the stuffing was coming out, as if they were old sofas. That is why they seem so second-hand. The cows are also little bits of bony things, sharp-footed and sharp-featured, thin and light so they can climb the lava crags and crevices for sandalwood. People say they climb trees. I have seen pictures of cows climbing trees in the islands, and they look as if they could and would really do so if they could get anything to eat by it; yet in truth

I never saw them climb trees. But I will tell you what I have seen. I have, time and again, seen cows sitting back on their hind legs in that same hired cow-pasture of mine where I wanted to pitch my tent, and eating mangoes out of a tree, and the tireless trade winds kept roaring and roaring like a cyclone.

Why didn't I go away out of the nerve-destroying trades? Well, the reasons would need a volume for themselves. Briefly, war times, troubles; two big, red-faced mounted German policemen riding up and down the lane before my door night and day daring me to make any sort of move so that they might arrest me for treason! And thus, and so, until martial-law was lifted from off Honolulu was I in mine own hired house, pent up in those belligerent days of wild and weird cows and woolly second-hand horses.

As I sat shivering one afternoon on the sunny and lee side of a cowered watching a cow with a giraffe neck and tongue as long as my arm reach up, and up, and up through the leaning top of a mango tree for a clump of mangoes which, I am glad to report, proved to be in the end not quite out of reach, a crowd of silent, sad and wholly respectful natives approached.

"Do you know a place about here where the wind don't blow?" I chattered this glibly through my teeth and felt mean and vicious, as if they had made the trades and were responsible for my malaria. A sad eyed and beautiful girl came forward.

"We do, Santa Claus, we do." Fancy yourself bundled up so that children call you Santa Claus in a land hot enough to bake a sweet potato!

The natives looked at one another, glanced half-unkindly at the slim, nervous little girl and then furtively looked at the abrupt end of Judd street and the dense jungle of algeroba trees against the steep lava mountain.

"Take me there, then, please. I am dying, dying of this tireless and eternal roar and rush of winds."

"We will need lanterns, lots of lanterns, Santa Claus."

The others of the party were the body, but this little, nut-brown nervous sprite was the soul of that sad and curious company of natives.

Lanterns? Yes, I had lots of lanterns waiting to light that tent—that tent that never saw the light of sun, lamp or lanterns, and we were off straight for the algeroba thicket at the abrupt end of Judd street, the little barefooted and brown-limbed sprite running far ahead. Pushing myself through the thorny copse, at her heels, she soon turned hastily back.

Two brown and haggard old women had confronted her at the dark mouth of the cavern, and she was as white as any little brown body could be; but the old women melted silently aside into the brush in a moment, and, lighting our lanterns, we entered the lava mountain, the child ahead as usual, the others in a string behind.

The women of the islands are fat, as a rule, especially the elder ones, enormously so. Commodore Wilkes, U. S. N., tells us (vol. 4, page 10) of a daughter of the first king of the islands who was "more than six feet in height and of a giant frame well covered with fat." But these two women at the mouth of the cave were as lean, hungry and hollow-eyed as Macbeth's witches, and quite as uncanny to see. They set me to shaking again. Maybe that is why I remember them so vividly, but I think there is something more than that. There are times

when you feel rather than see. There are atmospheres that are like daggers. Even a dog can tell in a second whether or not you like him or he likes you. But this is deep water and we must get on.

For the first few hundred yards we walked erect almost if not quite all the time. Then we found places where we had to stoop and to handle our lanterns carefully, so as to guard against the jagged lava on the sides and underfoot and overhead. After half a mile or so we saw a pool of water before us, glittering, gleaming, phosphorescent. We had passed bones, heaps and heaps of bones, all along. Oftentimes we sank to our ankles in soft, carpet-like, substances, with a strange and ugly crushing of bones—dust of the dead.

We found the water bridged before us when we came to it—bridged with coffins or pieces of coffins. These were modern, of redwood, lined with native red cloth, and this cloth fastened to the boards with big-headed brass nails, such as used to be seen on hair-covered trunks of half a century back.

We had got out of the trade winds truly by this time, but curiosity compelled me hurriedly forward now. All this was too modern. We must have ancient, sweet-smelling sandalwood and tread the dust of kings.

A full mile more and the girl stopped in a stately court of the dead to wait for me. I was exhausted and came but slowly. I had called back for the others, but they were not in hearing nor in sight. Yes, she knew a place further on where there was some precious sandalwood. She would get it for me.

The classic and odorous sandalwood is of a stately tree tipped with a pale pink flower. In its perfection it attains to the height of sixty or seventy feet and three feet in diameter. But it has perished from the islands, is ashes now, as a rule. In a few remote places, inaccessible to wild goats, wild hogs and wild cattle, and these places are few indeed that can be approached by man, you can find the pretty little flower struggle up out of some crevice in the lava crags, and you may sometimes be able to pluck an odorous branch, not bigger than a hazel, but that is about all you find of what was once worth a veritable gold mine to traders.

I sat down facing countless skulls on shelves of stone. Other bones were in heaps on either side. There was no artistic arrangement of them as with the old brown bones of the Capuchin monks at Rome, but they were all strangely white and bright and ghostly. More than once I fancied I saw lanterns burning before us and behind us, but these dim and fitful lights were of the dead.

"No one comes here, none but the two," said the girl.

"But your friends will come?"

I asked.

"No, they don't know the way here. They have gone by the main way."

"And has this cavern branches and cross roads?"

"Plenty, plenty—d zens! This one has a way out. About a mile further on is a little hole where the two old women and I can get through, but you will have to go back. I must go on into another branch of the cave to get sandalwood. I dare not take anybody there. You wait: I will be back soon," and taking my lantern she was gone as a shadow goes.

It was a gressome, ghostly place at best, but to be left alone there in the dark was dreadful. I shivered now as never before. I began to think of my sins, and they were many enough. Dim

lights began to cone out all along the rows of skulls like the rly lighting of electric lamps. I recalled how we are required to hold on to a string, when in the catacombs of Rome, so that we might be able to grope back again if the lamp fails or we take the wrong way. I remembered the terrible story about some parties who got lost and were never found in the old burial grounds of Rome.

That girl's lantern was a'ready nearly burned out. What did she mean to do! Pass out by the other way and leave my bones to the two old witches? The place was hot and close. It was horrible. I began to want air. Even the air of the terrible trades would be welcome. Indeed I would gladly have traded for all time the whole court of kings for five minutes of the wild and hated winds outside.

One hour, two hours! I had ceased to shiver and shake and was now burning up with fever.

At last there was a cat-like tread in the soft, crunching dust of the dead, then a hand on my shoulder, and I nearly leaped out of my skin with terror.

"The lamp has gone out, but I got two sticks of sandalwood. We can light them if we have to; but you better carry the wood and I will lead you."

Did ever a strong, gruff, burly and bullying old man, with a bad case of malaria, submit to the slightest hint of a child and be glad to do it? I have some slight acquaintance with one who did it then and there.

It was dark, except for the ghostly and fitful light of bones, all the way out, and dark when we got out, except that the evening star burned on her high altar from each of her five horns, like a ship on fire in a sapphire sea. Swiftly other stars lighted up, then slowly, stately and full-faced the moon swept up, as if it were an imperial glory to draw the mighty tides of these half-world waters after her.

And the winds were at rest! Was ever the world so still, so stately, so entirely great? The trade winds were at rest for the first time in forty days and forty nights.

And there at the mouth of the cavern were the gentle young men and the pretty brown girls of the party who had turned back. They had gone and brought poi and baked fish and bananas and mangoes and many another fruit, and we gathered around a great lava rock near the mouth of the cave, and the women and I ate while the young men played and sang and sang and played on sweet-stringed instruments, all of their own make, as if they would never weary. And such melody! It was worthy the night, worthy the moon and the stars, the Pleiades and the belt of Orion, the soul and the center of the mighty American ocean!

Then the little brown girl took up and lighted the sandalwood and laid the sticks blazing on the top of the big rock; and then we all gathered around close, and then with the weird, dim light on their sad, earnest faces and the sweet perfume from the flame of the tombs they sang the low, soft, tender and far-away songs of the dead.

Let us pause here. It were almost like profanity to say more, to dare attempt to describe the pathos of these perishing children of the great, warm waters. They sang as if they knew, as they sorely knew, that they, too, would soon be of the dead, and that none of all their race would survive to burn sandalwood or sing the song of the dead for them.

JOAQUIN MILLER.
in San Francisco Call.